

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE
FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PROGRAMS
PROCESSED PRODUCTS BRANCH

NOTICE TO THE TRADE

Changes to Requirements for Processed Products Branch
“Qualified Through Verification Program”

This is a notification to the food industry and other interested parties that the Processed Products Branch (PPB), Fruit and Vegetable Programs will be revising the requirements for participation in the “Qualified Through Verification” Program (QTV).


Recent incidents of food borne illness traceable to fresh and minimally processed fresh produce have prompted us to undertake a thorough review of the program requirements. After conducting our review, PPB notified current QTV Program participants of changes to the Program in May 2007.

The status of the changes to the QTV Program is as follows:

- The May 2007 version of the systems audit checklist will become the official audit of record starting April 1, 2008. Applicants were provided with copies of the new audit forms beginning July 2007.
- QTV program participants are required to undergo and pass an annual Plant Survey or Plant Systems Audit (PSA) conducted in conjunction with a QTV audit. Implementation of this requirement was completed by October 2007. Compliance with the Food Defense Addendum of the Plant Survey or PSA will be required by October 2008.
- All suppliers and intermediate handlers of produce and produce components supplied to QTV Program participants will be required to undergo and pass annual Good Agricultural Practice/Good Handling Practice (GAP/GHP) audits. Audits must be conducted by USDA, AMS. This requirement is optional at this time but will be required by October 2008. (Passing California Leafy Green Marketing Agreement audits will be acceptable in lieu of AMS GAP and/or GHP audits.)
- QTV Program participants will be required to provide a list of all producers and suppliers with respective addresses, the locations where the produce is grown and harvested (field locations), a list of commodities, and tentative harvest dates. This information will be required to be filed in section 5 in the QTV Plan developed by each applicant. This requirement is optional at this time but will be required by October 2008.

If you would like more information or have any questions, please contact:

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